

PUBLIC SAFETY – POLICE AND FIRE

STATUS QUO – STAYING UNINCORPORATED

The King County Sheriff provides local law enforcement for unincorporated areas, twelve cities, and other agencies. The department serves over half a million people.

North Highline is part of an area known as Precinct 4, which is headquartered in Burien. Precinct 4 provides services such as emergency (9-1-1) response, traffic enforcement, neighborhood “storefront” officers, a school resource officer, detectives, and community service officers to the North Highline area. Almost 40 people from the precinct serve the area.

Other parts of the Sheriff’s Office provide support and specialized functions like K-9 units, special investigations (such as homicide, sexual assault, and fraud), and the communications center (9-1-1 dispatchers). About 17 employees from these units serve the area, but when needed, North Highline can receive services from any of the staff members in each group.

Burien has its own police department, which is provided under contract by the King County Sheriff’s Office. The city determines the types and levels of service it will provide to residents, and the cost is adjusted to reflect those decisions. Seattle has its own police department.

Note: The numbers provided here include some services that are provided only in unincorporated areas. These services were excluded from the incorporation study because they can not be provided to a city.

North Highline Fire District was founded in 1942 and currently serves approximately 40,000 citizens in a 9-square mile area. North Highline Fire District’s service area includes both a portion of unincorporated King County and the City of Burien. 35 paid and 48 volunteer firefighters provide fire suppression and rescue services from two fire stations, which are staffed 24 hours a day.

Generally the status of a special district would not change with a change in governance unless the service was provided by the new government and the special district is dissolved.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- What level of law enforcement will there be in the North Highline neighborhoods after annexation?
- Will current programs, such as school officers and the Weed and Seed program, Store Front Office, be continued?
- Where would police services dispatch from – existing precinct headquarters? Would new facilities be constructed to serve community?